The PULPIT

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Christian Miracles in India

Bishop S. K. Mondel writes of the transformation that is being accomplished in India by Christianity: "As I move about from village to village I am almost invariably led to the edge, the outskirt of the villages, those sections where dwell hundreds of God's children who have been branded by Hinduism as outcasts, untouchables. My first visit to the edge of one of these villages reminded me of an incident connected with the beginnings of the British rule in India. In the early days of British occupancy, when the map of India was drawn up, the portions occupied by the British were marked red. There were only a few small spots of red here and there. A man, Ranjit Singh by name, looked at this map and prophesied, 'All will become red one day.' As I see the little colonies here and there of the despised outcasts who have accepted Christ, some prophetic instinct within me says, 'All will become Christian one day.'

"Yes, great things are happening which point in that direction. I have said to myself time and again, 'The age of miracles is not past.' When William Carey began missionary work in India he said, 'Attempt great things for God; expect great things from God.' Those great things are happening now right before our eyes."

How Christ Raised Dead Men

The late Heywood Broun once received an invitation to a reunion and banquet of his college class. He decided not to go. "The reason I'm not going," he said, "is that I don't like to go to eat with dead men." What he meant is not difficult to understand. Twenty years before a class of college boys had faced the future, "strong in will to strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield." But in many instances the strong will and the bright dream had lacked the vitality to live for twenty years. They had quietly died and in their place had come earth-bound complacency. Heywood Broun knew what had happened. He could not make merry at a banquet table where he would have to look about at lives that were the graveyards of high expectations. He did not want to eat with dead men.

Jesus found about him countless men who were "dead"; their dreams and hopes had passed. And he took compassion upon the walking and talking corpses about him, the men who looked at him with unknowing eyes, who no longer felt the God-given impulses of their souls, who wallowed in the mire of sin without knowing their whereabouts. "I am come," he said, "that they might have life." It was no idle boast. "We know," one of them testified later, "that we have passed from death unto life."—*Caxton Doggett, First Methodist Church, Mt. Dora, Fla.*

Today's Mighty Challenge

John Cournos, in his *Open Letter to Jews and Christians,* hit close to the heart of the matter. Seeing what was happening around the world in the late thirties, he wrote: "A human figure is necessary. A human figure with a maximum of humanness—the other extreme of the world offered to us by the Hitlers, the Stalins, the Mussolinis. . . . We—Jews and Christians alike—must answer the challenge of Hitler's *Mein Kampf* with the counter-challenge of that other struggle, the struggle of Jesus to establish a free spiritual kingdom on earth founded on mercy and love."—*Joseph K. Peaslee, Bethany Evangelical Lutheran Church, Baltimore, Md.*

The True Measure of Life

At the power house you will find two types of recording instruments: ammeters and voltmeters. The ammeter measures the flow of current, just the passage of the current through the wire. The voltmeter registers the force of the current, its strength and power. In life it is voltage that counts, not amperage. The question is not how long we live, but how vitally. Methuselah is said to have lived 969 years. During all those centuries he did nothing significant; he existed, begat and died. Jesus lived only some thirty-three years, but he lived so forcefully and fruitfully that the life of the world has been different ever since.—*Julius Fishbach, First Baptist Church, Lansing, Mich.*

A Soldier Dies in the Faith

In our first battle against the Germans (in the African theater of war) we were driven back with heavy casualties. Four days later I was able to go up and seek out the missing and dead because the French had rewon the positions. I would search out each slit-trench and seek the identification tag of the dead. Way out beyond the French positions I found one soldier who looked as if he had struggled before he died. He wasn't covered with rocks and dirt from the explosion the way others had been. I lifted him tenderly by the back of his jacket and took down the information from his "dog-tag." As I was doing this I noticed his hand resting upon a book. I looked and saw that in his dying moments he had tried to read. Unable to turn the pages he had seized them with his fist and pulled them aside as he read, tearing them from the binding. Page by page he read until he died. There under his hand was the New Testament. One man died seeing the Lord face to face. May all who are yet to die at home as well as on the battlefield be able to die in their faith, seeing God face to face.—*C. Umhau Wolf, First Lieutenant Chaplaincy Corps, Service Commission, National Lutheran Council.*

Kneeling, Then Seeing

Dr. E. Stanley Jones tells of visiting the church where Thorwaldsen's statue of the Christ stands. As he contemplated its beauty, the caretaker of the building plucked his sleeve and whispered, "You can't see his face till you kneel at his feet."—*Orva Lee Ice, Wilkinsburg Baptist Church, Pittsburgh, Pa.*

The Victory of the Risen Christ

Not long ago a friend of mine who had been in France during last Easter time was describing a service in a little evangelical church. They came on Easter day, these people of France. There were mostly old men, women and children. The young and middle-aged men were dead or in some unknown prison camp. The bodies of those who were there were thin from hunger. Their faces, even those of the children, were lined and drawn. Their eyes were ringed with darkness. They were ill clad. Their land was in bondage. Yet they sang! They sang with fervor, "Christ the Lord is risen today, Hallelujah!" My friend said: "As they sang there came into that group a strange, strong power, the power of the risen Christ, and I felt with them that no matter how dark the present might be or the future might become, there was still the strength of the risen Christ, that victory which overcomes the world."—*John E. Skoglund, Baptist Divinity School, Berkeley, Calif.*

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The Pulpit

CHARLES CLAYTON MORRISON, *Editor*

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Life's Deepest Law

By Ralph W. Sockman

WHAT is life's deepest law? At once there flashes into our minds the old saying, "Self-preservation is nature's first law." And so it seems. The blades of grass pushing up through the earth's warming crust under the pressure of spring are seeking a place for themselves. The birds which wing their way northward to build their nests and nurture their young are driven by an instinctive desire for self-preservation. And we human beings, on both sides of the battle lines, are calling this a war of survival. Yes, on the face of it, self-preservation does seem to be nature's first law.

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But is it life's deepest law? For answer the Christian does not take a Gallup Poll of what the man on the street thinks. The Christian turns to Christ himself.

When we look at Jesus he seemed to be engaged during his earthly work in helping men to save themselves. In his opening message, at his home town of Nazareth, Jesus took as his commission a passage from Isaiah which went like this: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised; and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." When we consider these clauses—hope for the poor, healing for the broken-hearted, sight for the blind, liberty for the captives—I say, when we see Christ coming to give these to men, he resembles the captain of a rescue ship throwing out life-preservers to the sinking survivors of a shipwreck.

JESUS' LAWS OF LIVING

Yes, the Son of Man came to help men save their lives. He said, "I am come that they might have life and have it more abundantly." He gathered little children to him and gave them a new standing in a society which neglected them. By his chivalrous treatment of women he gave them a new status of dignity. He fed the hungry. He healed the sick.

And in doing all this Jesus laid down many laws of living. These laws differ in depth and apply to differing moods. For instance, when we are fretting ourselves with fears for the future, we need to heed Christ's law, "Be not anxious for the morrow." Or when we grow censorious and pharisaical, impugning the motives of others, we should hear Christ's law, "Judge not that ye be not judged." Or when the resources of life run low and our souls take on a lean and hungry look, then we should apply Christ's law: "Ask, and it shall be given you, seek and ye shall find."

Yet while Jesus laid down so many laws for the wise use of the mind that he is rightly called the Master Teacher, nevertheless, the supreme symbol of Christianity is not a Book. And while Jesus laid down so many principles of healing and laws of health for the body that he is rightly called the Great Physician, nevertheless the symbol of Christianity is not the Cadeuceus, that emblem of the serpent coiled about the staff, which adorns the uniforms of the medical corps. And while the birth of Christ at Bethlehem gives such a perennial glow to life that the story of Christmas never grows old, nevertheless the central symbol of Christianity is not a manger.

THE CROSS THE SUPREME SYMBOL

No, the supreme symbol of Christianity is the *cross,* because the deepest law of life is voluntary, redemptive suffering. Saint Paul put it thus: "Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ." That was the law of his life underlying all his other laws and all his works. Jesus, though sinless himself, went down to be baptized in the Jordan to show that he felt responsible for the sins of his society. He was the divine sin-bearer. Jesus, the strong young carpenter who is never recorded as having been ill, so entered into the pains and sufferings of others that he felt them as his own. He was the divine pain-bearer. Jesus, the teacher whose talents might have won for him social prestige, threw in his lot with the poor and the oppressed. He was the divine poverty-bearer.

And if we would call ourselves Christians, whatever else we have or do not have, this one thing we must have, and this is it, sufficient love to bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ. I may have the virtues of purity and honesty and industry, but if I have not love, they profit me nothing. I may have faith so that I can remove mountains of troubles and pray away all anxieties, but if I have not love sufficient to help bear others' burdens, I am not fulfilling the law of Christ.

Yes, the cross is the supreme symbol of Christianity because the deepest law of our Lord is voluntary, redemptive suffering. "Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ."

SOCIETY'S DEEPEST LAW

Moreover, in the second place this law of voluntary redemptive burden-bearing is the deepest law of society, however it may look on the surface.

The laws of society are almost beyond number. Our legislatures pass them by the ton and print them by the

tome. But like the laws of Jesus, the laws of society differ in their depth and purpose. We have, for instance, many laws whose purpose is to preserve our independence, to keep others from encroaching upon us. We Americans make much of our Bill of Rights. And we should. Freedom of thought, freedom of worship, freedom from interference in our homes—these are all precious privileges which we must guard with alert eye. We cannot develop a strong society without sturdy individuals. A thousand sheep-like minds herded together do not make a strong community of citizens. We should have the privilege, and also the duty, of standing on our own feet, saying our own say, and minding our own business.

'ROUGHING IT SMOOTHLY'

There are some things no one else can do for us. A wealthy Siamese father once brought his young son to a missionary school in Siam and said to the principal: "I want my boy to have a part in this popular sport you call football. But of course I do not want him to undergo the hardships of playing. I have, therefore, brought one of my servants with him. You must let my son sit on the sidelines. The servant will do the playing for him." We smile at such an attitude as ridiculous. Of course, there are some games no one else can play for us. No one else can eat for us; no one else can grow for us; no one else can study for us. There is a law of Christian society. "Every man shall bear his own burden," and we must strengthen our laws to preserve individual initiative and responsibility.

Others of our laws are designed to insure our comfort and security. Our modern society has been proceeding on the principle that if we could make people comfortable we could make them happy. Hence by the aid of physicians, engineers and lawmakers we have improved our housing, shortened hours of work, reduced drudgery and bodily pain. We have been seeking happiness through comfort. Some years ago a Maine summer resort, in seeking patrons from Boston and New York, put out a little folder bearing this interesting title, "Roughing it Smoothly." Well, that is what we want, isn't it? We want life made comfortable—and yet has harmony increased with physical comfort? A man with a cynical but acute eye pointed out a few years ago that the divorce rate had increased in about the same ratio as the rise in the sale of vacuum cleaners. And the twentieth century which we proudly called "the century of progress" in our great exhibition at Chicago a decade ago has had the worst war record in all history.

BURDEN-BEARING IS FUNDAMENTAL

No, the stark fact confronts us that the increase of physical comforts has not produced peace of mind or peace in society. Let us not fool ourselves. We desire the Four Freedoms—freedom of worship, freedom of speech, freedom from want and freedom from fear. These are all good. But the Four Freedoms will not banish the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. Bills of Rights, the Four Freedoms—all these are not enough to guarantee a strong society.

If men are to live together they must be bound by a deeper law. Back in the Genesis story of creation we read: "And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make him a helpmeet for him." And that is what a true wife is—a helpmeet for her husband. And the family thus formed is held together by the basic law, "Bear ye one another's burdens." The deepest law of the family is voluntary, redemptive suffering. Heartstrings are strung today almost to the breaking point because they are stretched around the world. Fathers and mothers would gladly endure the hardships of their sons in dangerous places if they could. And those boys at the front would gladly bear the burdens of anxiety and hardship resting on their parents at home.

Amid the brutality of war, the beauty of these family ties lends a redeeming light. "Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of the family"; for the family in this regard exemplifies the law of Christ.

And now if we believe our Bible, the nation as well as the family is to be built on this basic law of voluntary redemptive suffering. The prophet Isaiah came to see that the Messiah who could redeem his people Israel must be a Suffering Servant, whom he pictured thus: "He was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." We of the Christian faith hail Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ and Redeemer, because we believe he fits that prophetic pattern. We believe that our Christ of the Cross is the Lord of Life and that nations as well as individuals must learn to live by his laws.

WHAT ABOUT NATIONS?

Ah, but do I hear someone say that it is an idle dream to expect people to live together in a nation, as they do in a family, on the principle of "Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ"? Certainly that does not seem to be the way they live together in our competitive society. The principle on which we appear to operate is, each man for himself and the devil take the hindmost.

Yet, pause a minute. Longfellow once likened our beloved nation to a ship. He sang:

> Thou, too, sail on, O Ship of State,
> Sail on, O Union, strong and great;
> Humanity with all its fears,
> With all its hopes of future years,
> Is hanging breathless on thy fate.

Let us take this figure of Longfellow and think of our nation as a ship. Out yonder on the deep a ship is struck by a torpedo or a mine. What is the law which rules that ship in such a moment of peril? Is it the Bill of Rights? Is it the Four Freedoms? No, each sailor does not look out first for himself. The wounded are put into the lifeboats. The officers go last, and the higher the rank, the later they go. And the bridge where the captain stands is not a bridge to safety, but a bridge to salvation. The honor of the

service demands: "Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill the law" of the ship: for the law of the sea at such moment exemplifies the law of Christ. And if our nation is to resemble "The Ship of State" to which Longfellow likened it, this law of the sea must become also the law of the land.

A VISION OF BROTHERHOOD

Yes, and if we believe our Bible we must look forward to making the world, as well as the family and the nation, adopt this deepest law of life: "Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ." In the last chapter of Holy Scripture the writer of Revelation describes his vision of a river flowing out from the throne of God, and on its bank is the tree of life whose leaves shall be for the healing of the nations. Such is the seer's conception of the power of God through Christ making for a family of brotherly nations. Oh, it is a vision, yes. But it is not a mirage. If we can keep marching under the banner of Christ with a heroism and sacrifice akin to that with which our soldiers are now marching under the flags of our nations, if we will maintain our willingness to ration our luxuries after this war until the starving children of the world are fed, if we will persevere at the task of working out some form of world government, then the lives now being laid down in many lands will not have been lost and the dream for which brave men are dying will come true.

From the families of men to the family of nations for which mothers' sons are now dying, the deepest law of life is the law of the cross, voluntary, redemptive suffering. But it is so deep that one hesitates to discuss it. Not by words, but by living, do we come to comprehend the cross. Yet if we live long enough and suffer enough the meaning of the cross grows clear. Henry Drummond was such a buoyant and vivacious personality that he was called the prince. He was a most popular preacher to students. He made religion so winsome that he won the young. But at the end he was laid low by long and agonizing pain. In his dying hours a friend played for him some of the hymns which had been popular in his services with students. Drummond listened in silence. Then the friend played and sang the old hymn with these lines:

I'm not ashamed to own my Lord
Or to defend his cause,
Maintain the glory of his cross
And honor all his laws.

Drummond's dying spirit was aroused. He beat time with his frail finger, and then said softly, "There is nothing to beat that."

Yes, if we live long enough and suffer enough the day comes when the vicarious love of the cross is not only life's deepest law of life but also the dearest law of life.

WHEN church and state fall out completely, it is ill with the state; and when church and state get on too well together, there is something wrong with the church. T. S. ELIOT.

Highways of History

BY CHARLES WESLEY FISHER

A FEW years ago I drove the Pennsylvania turnpike which runs from Harrisburg to Pittsburgh. It is a highway with all of the latest engineering improvements. What a far cry it is from that modern superhighway to the Indian trails that our pioneering forefathers traveled or to the rough old cobblestone streets in certain parts of old Boston! Long before Columbus set sail on that voyage which led to the discovery of the Americas, the Inca Indians of Peru had perfected a system of highways which are still in existence and in use. The old Romans, too, had a highly developed system of highways extending from Great Britain through France to Italy and Rome and out again from Rome to every part of the empire which she ruled. Some of those highways went through the land of the Bible, and were trod upon by Jesus himself and by his apostles and other followers. Some of these roads are still in use. Others are no longer in use but still can be seen by the traveler of today.

Have you ever stood along a straight stretch of highway and looking toward the horizon line wondered where it led? A missionary's wife among the backwaters in Mississippi said that a bayou is a wonderful thing. "From a bayou you can go into the creek and from the creek into the river and from the river into a bigger river and then into the ocean. Why, from a bayou you can go everywhere!" she said. On a highway you can go just about anywhere. But if the road doesn't go where you want to go, it matters very little whether it is dirt or concrete. It just isn't the road you want to take.

In the history of the world there are three great highways which stand out—not because of the way they were built, but because of where they led and what happened along them. They still exist. They lead to where no other highways go. Things are still happening along them. They were and are highways of God.

I

First is the Jerusalem Road. Shortly after the birth of Jesus, Joseph and Mary brought Jesus to Jerusalem and dedicated him to God. Every year after that Jesus was brought to Jerusalem for the Passover celebration. So when in later years during his mature ministry Jesus turned his face toward Jerusalem and started the journey, the Jerusalem road was not strange to him. Luke tells us that some of his greatest teaching occurred on this last journey. It was on this trip that he commissioned the seventy disciples and sent them forth and gave to them his great commandment: "Love the Lord your God with your whole heart, with

your whole soul, with your whole strength, with your whole mind. Also your neighbor as yourself." Here too he instructed the apostles on prayer and taught them to pray after this manner: "Our Father, who art in Heaven. . . ."

The city of Jerusalem is located on a high flat plateau. The city is 2,500 feet above sea level. The plateau is divided by a deep valley. That day Jesus was approaching the city. If we were standing on the wall of Jerusalem looking east, we would first see him as the party comes up over the top of the Mount of Olives. They stop on the mount, but we are too far away to discern what they are doing. Then they come on, down the slope into the Valley of Kidron. There is a bridge in the valley, and already the little stream has started to dry up. Then they start the long, winding trek up the steep slope toward the city walls upon which we are standing. As they draw near we can catch bits of conversation and shouts of praise. The people all turn out to greet the Master and his friends at the city gate. "Hosanna!" they cry, and cut branches of palm trees and spread them along with their garments on the ground and bow down before him. They welcome their great Messiah who enters the city in triumph. Nearly everyone welcomes him and shouts his praises. It is a glorious sight.

What a triumphal entry! Yet there is something strange about it. When kings make a triumphal entry they usually ride in chariots of gold drawn by fine horses, but this King makes his triumphal entry into the great city riding on the back of a long-eared donkey. Then as we press near and start asking questions we find out what happened over there on the Mount of Olives as the party was approaching the city. They stopped and Jesus gazed at the city and actually wept over the sinfulness which the city represented. Amid the hosannas of the triumphal entry he wept over Jerusalem!

The glory that was his as he journeyed the Jerusalem road did not blind Jesus to the evils around him. Jerusalem had destroyed the prophets! Jerusalem did not stand for the things he was teaching. There was bound to be trouble. Amid the glory and the hosannas his eyes remained open and he saw clearly. His head was not turned. He did not weaken his message so that he might remain in public favor.

Harry Ward, one of our great socially minded Christian leaders in the Methodist Church, was under fire. He was accused of being a red. A certain man was conducting the investigation. He handed a pamphlet to Harry Ward. "Here, did you write this?" asked the investigator. Evidently he was trying to trap Ward. "No," Harry Ward calmly replied. "You believe what it says, though?" "Yes." "Well, if you didn't write it, who did?" the inquisitor demanded gruffly. "You did!" "What?" "You wrote that pamphlet yourself!" And it was the truth. The man had formerly been a co-worker with Dr. Ward in the attempt to obtain a better chance for all of God's children to enjoy some of God's earth. The man became popular. Popularity went to his head. His sturdy character became wishy-washy. Rather than directing the public opinion, he was now being directed by it. Now he had completely changed colors. This quisling didn't even recognize a pamphlet which he, himself, had written and was trying to use to condemn another man.

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that slayest the prophets!" Jesus was not blinded. It was with mixed emotions that he approached the city. Amid the hosannas of the triumphal entry he wept over Jerusalem.

The donkey is a sturdy little animal. As we see Jesus enter the city on the donkey's back, we can't help noticing that this is the way of Jesus. He is humble even amid the triumph of the moment. He gives glory to the Father and does not let the glory given unto him go to his head. The sturdy, sure-footed, long-eared donkey symbolized that humility. Jesus is perfect love. "Love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up."

The Jerusalem road is truly a highway of God for two reasons: (1) Jesus traveled it; (2) the events that happened along that road form the basis of a spiritual highway which leads toward God. Webster's dictionary defines a highway as "a thoroughfare, a road or a way open to the public." The Jerusalem road is a highway of God.

II

The second highway of history is the Jericho Road. We don't know what kind of road it was, but we do know what happened along it. The Jerusalem road is a way of love that vaunteth not itself, neither is it blinded by popularity. The Jericho road is a way of expressing that love in the form of service and responsibility.

A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves. A traveler was always in danger of attack along the Jericho road. Attackers would hide behind the rocks and ambush anyone who dared take that road. This certain traveler was beaten, robbed, and even his clothing was stolen—because good clothing was scarce in those days just as it is today. The thieves left him lying at the side of the road half dead. By chance a priest was going down the same road, but on seeing him he went past on the opposite side. So did a Levite who came to the spot; he looked at him but passed on the opposite side. However, a Samaritan traveler came to where he was and felt pity when he saw him; he went to him, bound his wounds, pouring oil and wine into them, mounted him on his own steed and attended to him.

Why should that Samaritan have done that? He didn't have to. No one would have known about it if he hadn't. Why should he be the one to look after him, why shouldn't someone else do it? His attitude might have been: "Well, if the poor fool was silly enough to get mixed up with robbers, he's got only what was coming to him." The others passed him by, and they were respected people in the community; if they passed him by why shouldn't the Samaritan? The Samaritan didn't have any special responsibility toward this unfortunate victim. He didn't know him. They weren't related. Why should he look after this unfortunate Jew? He didn't have any special responsi

bility. But he did have a responsibility. The responsibility that one child of God has toward his brother child of God. Love found its expression in pity. But pity alone is rather a feeble sort of thing. Only when pity is harnessed with helpful service does it act as an expression of love. And service means responsibility.

What would you think of the Samaritan on the Jericho road if he, after having bound the wounds and carried the man a mile, had said: "Sorry, but I can't take you further; I have to hurry along. Tough on you, but I must think of myself and my family"? Love means following clear through and not shirking full responsibility. The Samaritan crossed the street and took on responsibility—the responsibility of caring for the stranger.

The Old Testament tells us that "in the days of Jael the highways were unoccupied and the travelers walked through the byways." Woe be unto us and our children if in the days of 1944 the highways of God are unoccupied!

The Jericho road is truly a highway of God.

III

The third highway with which we are concerned is the Emmaus Road. Two of the disciples were on their way down the road to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. They were talking about the events of the past few days—the crucifixion of the one they loved and had counted on to redeem Israel. They couldn't quite believe the story that the women had told to them that morning about Jesus' being risen. The whole thing sounded fantastic. To God and to all the people he was a prophet, strong in action and in utterance, but he had been delivered up by the high priests, sentenced to death by the rulers, and crucified. We can almost hear them as they talk; they are downcast, dejected and a trifle bitter: "Our own hope was that he would be the Redeemer of Israel; but he is dead, and that is three days ago! We had hoped, but . . . what's the use?" It was then on the Emmaus road that Jesus came to them. "O foolish men," they could hear him say; and then he recalled to their minds all that the Old Testament Scriptures had to say about himself. The disciples did not recognize Jesus until after they had reached the village of Emmaus and were eating together. He took the loaf, blessed it, broke it, and handed it to them. Their eyes were open and the resurrection became real to them.

Foolish men! they thought that perfect love could be killed. Sin slew perfect love on the cross and these men had thought perfect love had been defeated. But perfect love could endure to be crucified and cannot be defeated. With the resurrection it blazed anew in the disciples' hearts. No longer for them was Jesus a dead Christ hanging upon a cross. Now he was a living, active, loving Christ, one who was with them and in them, inspiring them to new heights of love and service, stimulating them to cross the street and take on responsibility, giving them dynamic for courageous, unselfish living.

And after these disciples had recognized Jesus they said one to another: "Did not our hearts glow within when he was talking to us on the road, opening the scriptures for us?" Now they couldn't understand how they or anyone else could ever fail to recognize Jesus as he walked with them. Yet there are those who walk daily with Jesus and recognize him not. There are those who think that perfect love has been slain by the chaos of the present times. Then there are those who have discovered Jesus walking with them and their hearts are warmed and the resurrection becomes real to them. The Emmaus road is a road of victory. It is a road of fellowship with Jesus. It is a road of heart-warming love. Truly, the Emmaus road is a highway of God.

A highway is a thoroughfare; it is a road or a way open to the public. The Jerusalem Road, the Jericho Road, the Emmaus Road—all highways—all highways of God leading toward loving understanding and joy and abundant living. These three highways all merge together into the highway that Isaiah describes: "And a highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness."

Christianity Is Possible!

By Joseph W. Reeves

ARE WE fooling ourselves with the Christian venture, the Christian thrust? Are Christians shadow-boxing? Are we striving for something that is impossible, and which can never be at home in this topsy-turvy world? Is Christianity possible? Contrary to the conclusions reached by many, I am saying: Everything else is impossible!—nigh unbearable; give us Christianity that we may live! The writer of the thought for "daily devotions" for a recent day correctly appraised our handling of Christianity. "Custodians for 2000 years of the gospel of Jesus Christ, we have spread it—but not widely enough; we have practiced it—but not consistently enough; we have loved it—but not fervently enough." It is a case of too little Christianity, too long.

That Christianity is possible has been proved over and over again. The most towering example of all is Jesus Christ himself. He was no wax figure, no plaster-of-paris saint. He wasn't a symbol of goodness or creation of the imagination. He was the son of Joseph and Mary; he walked the streets of Nazareth; he missed the wooden peg and hit his finger with the hammer; he knew where the fish were plentiful; his hands of actual flesh were pierced and he died on a cross. Christianity impossible? Nothing could be further from the truth!

Paul at great hazard lived Christianity and spread it across the Roman empire. It is interesting to note that he once walked the Appian road now so prominent

in the news. Recall how Christianity got a toe-hold and leverage for influence in the ancient world; by the early Christians "outthinking, outliving, and outdying" their pagan contemporaries. Christianity can't be downed as long as there are men and women who will loyally and persistently lift up Christ in their lives. Christianity is possible.

II

Christianity is pertinent. My dictionary defines pertinent as meaning "appropriate to the occasion." I believe Christianity appropriate to the current occasion. I can't think of a single relationship—from personal and family problems to the gravest international issues—where it won't guide us into, and keep us in, the right way. It offers no easy panacea but an eventual cure for our major and destroying maladies. Of late I have been reading several books which make very clear our lines of divisions and the reasons for our estrangements, cleavages and antagonisms. In each case they have developed because we did not apply Christianity. The labor-capital issue need not have been drawn in America. There would have been no war with Germany and Japan had we followed through with Christianity. Somehow we thought it wasn't appropriate—just had to do with churchgoing and funerals.

Instead, Christianity is a cradle-to-the-grave proposition. It needs to be as influential in business and politics as in prayer-meeting and the giving of alms. Christianity is pertinent to all your problems, and you will not get the right answers until you solve them according to Christian values. Everything has fallen apart because we have paid so little heed to the one thing which can hold men and the several sections of the earth together, namely: Christianity. We have used too little of it far too long. Christianity is pertinent.

III

Christianity is practical. We criticize our President, saying, He was reared in luxury, fed with a silver spoon, attended exclusive schools, never had to worry about money, where the next meal was coming from; he has been an inheritor of wealth, and has spent federal funds prodigally.

But you can't say those things about Jesus! He grew up in an ordinary, frugal home. He had to work for his bread, and for food for his younger brothers and sisters. He felt the pinch of poverty. He lived in what we would call "an occupied country," for Palestine had been conquered by Rome. He knew the power and cruelty of Caesar's sword. He didn't deal with ethereal themes. He talked about everyday occupations and conditions. Fishing, going on a journey, sowing seed, pulling an ox out of a ditch, shepherding sheep, sweeping floors, laying foundations, nursing a sick child, harvesting fruit, the sacredness of the home, unemployment, the position of children in society, the use and abuse and worship of money—surely these were most practical matters. He encountered the unjust steward, the obstinate judge, hypocrites, and the scheming politician. Let us not forget that he was a carpenter far longer than he was a public teacher. He was a man of practical affairs, knowing what would work, and what would not work, in all the varied human relationships.

We can't describe our present way of operating the world as being very practical. Why not reshape it according to the pattern of a practical man, Jesus of Nazareth? Christianity is practical.

IV

Christianity is personal. Its success and impetus is up to you and you and you. If we have had too little of it, too long, now is the time to arouse ourselves and become more energetic and devoted in our allegiance. One mother is disturbed because her soldier son wrote home this question: "If you love me as you say you do, why did you let this happen?" It happened because too many fathers and mothers were engrossed in their card parties and businesses and lodges and pleasures. We assumed that we could get along all right even though Jesus received only a marginal consideration in our lives. Our undoing has been too little Christianity, too long. We have spread Christianity—but not widely enough; we have practiced Christianity—but not consistently enough; we have loved Christianity—but not fervently enough; we have suffered for Christianity—but not deeply or gravely enough.

The four things I have said about Christianity point the way to our salvation. Christianity is possible; if Jesus could live it in "occupied Palestine" and Paul in pagan Europe, we can live it in our day. Christianity is imperatively pertinent in the present world situation. Christianity is practical, the only truly practical philosophy of life ever expounded. Christianity is personal, not something another can accept or do for you. Will your link in the chain be weak or strong? Jesus said: "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

THE fundamental reality of life is the interplay, conflict and continuous adjustment of a multitude of different groups. Acknowledgment of this truth would create a wholly different spiritual and intellectual climate. It would be recognized that men can live at peace with one another only if each individual and group renounces the claim to have the final and decisive word. We must cease to think and feel either in a vertical dimension, wherein we are related to God, or in a horizontal dimension, wherein we are related to our neighbors, and substitute a triangular relationship of God, self and neighbor.

ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

WE see clearly that if the Kingdom of God is to be our first and final loyalty, then that must begin somewhere; it must begin in us, in me. We must not only talk about the new order—we must be the new order, it must start with us; we must cease to be a part of the disease and become a part of the cure.

E. STANLEY JONES.

The Plight of Freedom

By Paul E. Scherer

THE PLIGHT of man in the modern world is a matter of profound and increasing concern to philosophers. Our statesmen seem hardly even conscious of it. The last century without question has brought about more radical changes in man's life than any other equal period in recorded history. Today the deep significance of the dilemma he faces is becoming so obvious that anybody who runs may read. He is laboring as never before under four vast slaveries: the slavery of the lost conscience, the lost neighbor, the lost God and the lost challenge. With but one word set at the bottom to sum it up: Lost!

The story of how all this came about doesn't take long in telling. It was only as far back as 1850 or thereabouts that our moral standards began to disintegrate with considerable earnestness. It began to seem that right and wrong didn't really root in anything much that you could hang on to. There wasn't any honest hitching-post in the universe. If you were a professor, you studied behavior patterns and traced them to social maladjustments. If you were an ordinary citizen you just did the best you could in the growing confusion. There was some tension in your soul, but not much; not enough to make it worth God's while to go to so much trouble in heaven because of the wrong he thought was under it! You weren't to blame. It was the way things were; and people had to be practical. They had to look out for themselves.

WHEN GOD GOES

It is almost inconceivable that such an order as we have built could ever have got such a hold on a professedly Christian civilization; but it did. You weren't anybody's neighbor any more; you were the tenant that lived in the apartment next door, and made the stairs creak late at night. You were a shareholder who bought and sold in distant markets, with the great god Profit pulling the strings. You joined a pressure group. Lazarus didn't lie at anybody's gate full of sores: he was Case 3486 BX in the county hospital. Brotherhood was a phrase: the facts were white and black and yellow; Methodist, Baptist, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Episcopalian and Roman Catholic; Jew and German and Japanese. What would you have expected to see happen in a situation like that, where the only down-to-earth relationship that was left between one man and another lay either in the realm of politics or in the realm of economics? Whatever we might have expected, we know now what we got: communism first, then fascism and nazism. There was no other answer —with God gone!

And he was. For one reason or another, to the crowd on the sidewalk he just didn't seem necessary any longer. There was nothing that called for him. You built your own world without him, of gadgets and the teeming inventions of science; never mind his law, and never mind his leave. There was a kind of thrust about life that would keep it moving *up!* So the evolutionist said. And almost everybody believed. Religion was an annex where a person—who the chances are by this time had already in reality ceased to *be* a person!—might sit and contemplate the ultimate if he wanted to. Or have his so-called sins forgiven. But as far as the actual dynamics of Western civilization were concerned, God was not there.

So there came about on this earth of ours a dreadful and abysmal sense of futility. Human life had lost its challenge. Man had no mission left. No commanding purpose. No end to serve. He amounted to very little, and knew it. Ask the next one you meet! He got him together a lot of silly fictions to pay him back for the dignity he had lost. He was an Aryan. He was this, and he was that. But over his head the sheer and utter meaninglessness of it all began to lower like a cloud. The sun was gone, and he no longer cast even a shadow. The song died on his lips. The only downright rational goal of his existence was comfort; and nothing pricked him intolerably until it pricked him there.

FREEDOMS THAT ARE FUTILE

Come to him now, in that plight, with your freedom of speech. The schoolboy thought it meant freedom *from* speeches. But that was wishful thinking! If the process I have been trying to describe goes far enough, freedom of speech won't mean much to him any longer. He may be quite ready to give up talking if he can have back any of the things that mean more. Tell him about freedom of religion. But we have enjoyed that here in America for many years. Thousands of us have been free of it entirely! He knows, if he thinks, that all these are nothing but symptoms. They don't come anywhere near being a diagnosis. Freedom from want and freedom from fear! It isn't Utopia that he lacks or needs. His real problem isn't political, and it isn't economic. He is face to face not with the mere possibility of losing the privileges which make him British or American: he is face to face with the dire possibility in this twentieth century of losing the stature which makes him human!

That's why not Hitler but Hell itself could turn loose its fury. There was an editorial in the French papers when Paris fell. This is how it read: "Misfortune doesn't rise from the dust, it is prepared in the lives of the people." When a man has lost his conscience, his neighbor, his God, his aim in living, it's no trick at all to fool him into any kind of surrender you plan for him. Any slavery is better than the slavery which has dried up the roots of his being! And that can overtake him as readily in New York or Washington as in Tokyo or Berlin. Why doesn't somebody who has a chance to be believed put his finger on it?

Significantly enough, it is against just this process of dehumanization that the Christian gospel stands

four-square. That gospel doesn't address itself to fragmentary ends, like the preservation of democracy; it sets itself to safeguard the soil and the soul out of which democracy springs: those freedoms which gave our freedom birth, and without which man can never be anything but less than he is.

TRUTH THAT IS ABSOLUTE

Here is our tremendous and immediate concern. We are, as a people here in America, trying as perhaps we have never tried before to think and plan our way into the future. Surely there is only one mood that fits us: the sober mood of those who are freshly and strangely aware of a profounder commitment than any even they had ever dreamed, in their decisive grasp a heritage of such moment that to betray it now would be to wear thin the patience of God with our generation.

Over against the lost conscience of humanity we have in our keeping the freedom of a Truth which is not our own. It isn't relative. It is absolute. It didn't grow up of itself under the changing weather of human history. It is the word and will of God in human hearts, and the pressure of God on the human soul. It isn't a freedom that shifts with the seasons and is fastened nowhere. The freedom out of which democracy grew never stood for that. It bore its witness—which is what the word "Protestant" meant once!—to this slavery under God which was perfect freedom; and made men *men,* not *mice!* It got on its legs one day in the little town of Worms. They were the legs of a miner's son, but they were planted sturdily enough against princes. With the fingers of Andrew Melville it plucked at the robe of a Scottish king who was babbling of his "rights" and said: "Thou God's silly vassal, there are two kings and two kingdoms in the realm of Scotland—King James and King Christ Jesus—Whose subject King James is, and of Whose Kingdom he is *not* King, lord nor head, but a member!" That is freedom: it is bondage, vertical bondage! Wherever did we get the idea that we could tamper with that bondage and win?

THE ONLY GOSPEL OF PEACE

It is that Truth and no other which sets me here over against your lost neighbor, to be bone of your bone, flesh of your flesh, blood of your blood: striking our hands together, white hand in black, brown hand in yellow, across everything that divides us; because there's one thing that unites us. And it isn't the Democratic party! It isn't Americanism! It isn't even humanity! It is the good news that God is this day in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. That is the gospel of peace Paul is always talking about—to be like shoes for a man's feet, making him suddenly aware of the common life about him, and of the only genuine relationship there is between human beings that can keep them human.

Call it, if you like, freedom of comradeship. It is the freedom to be something other than a number in a register, one item in a system of mass production; to be part of the family itself of God: more than individual men and women redeemed by his love. We need to remind ourselves of that. Back in the days of Cromwell there was a man whose name was Praise-God Barebones. He had a brother whose name was longer: it was Jesus-Christ-Came-Into-The-World-To-Save Barebones. Which is good Lutheran doctrine. But still more is behind. There was a third brother whose name was If-Christ-Had-Not-Died-For-Thee-Thou-Hadst-Been-Damned Barebones. Which, writes Howard Robinson of Oberlin, was just too much name: so they called him Damned Barebones, for short! It is all very well to remember that the Christian gospel is *for you;* but it doesn't even *know* you apart from the complexities of this human situation where God has set you to live your life.

Let us not oversimplify this thing! We *are* individual men and women redeemed; but we are individual men and women redeemed into a commonwealth of the redeemed, past, present and future—a Christian community that reaches at this very moment into every nation and binds together the citizens of them all into what the Archbishop of Canterbury has called the great new fact of our time, the one ground of hope for the coming days. "So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another."

WE—AND OUR NEIGHBORS

There is an allegory that puts the matter grimly but quite well. I came across it the other day in Robert Searle's *Tell It to the Padre.* An anthropologist died and went to heaven. Being a scientist, before he accepted the invitation to enter he suggested that he would like very much to investigate hell. The privilege was granted, and when the ebony doors were opened he saw before him a vast table spread with such bounty as he had never seen; but around it sat cadaverous folk, emaciated and starving, their arms bound in front of them straight and stiff with splints so nobody could get his hand to his mouth. Ghastly and unbearable it was; so he hurried back to the Golden Gate. "I've seen enough," said he to St. Peter; "I'm ready now." But there, when the glittering portals swung back, what should he see but a vast table again, laden with equal bounty, and equal hosts around with arms bound straight and stiff in splints; but they were sleek and happy folk! "I don't understand," he said. "The circumstances are just the same—with this Eternity of difference!" "It's all quite simple, really," answered the saint. "You don't feed *yourself* with your arms like that: but you *can* feed your *neighbor.* Up here, you see, we have learned to feed each other!"

No man then can lose his conscience, and no man can lose his neighbor, with God around! That is why Paul goes on: "Above all, taking the shield of faith." Over against the slavery of the lost God, that's freedom! I suppose it is because we can't make a go of anything ultimately which fails to establish us in some sort of factual relation to the real world in which we live; and this real world in which we live is geared somehow to God! Science *isn't* all that matters. Knowledge *isn't* all that life needs to send the blessed thing spinning away toward Paradise on greased rails.

No matter how solemnly we try to adjust ourselves to fiction, in school or factory or home, so long do we succeed only in harrying our civilization down God-forsaken roads to ruin!

TOWARD A RE-CREATED HUMANITY

We are paying a frightful bill for our illusions. There is a blunt fact in front of us: that the evil in this world isn't an accident. It is fundamental. Progress won't rid us of it. We shall only sink deeper and deeper if we keep trying to go it alone. It is time we were getting down to rock-bottom. And rock-bottom in you and me isn't an angel: it's a "subterranean gentleman" who goes on grinning at education and philosophy and continues to "make of life a hell and a disaster." We've got to deal with that; or all our talk about new orders is twaddle.

It is precisely at this point that the problem of freedom becomes religious—as do all the other problems of democracy, of politics and economics, sooner or later. If we plan to build anything, we've got to start building with this perverse stuff of which we are made: fact, not fancy. Listen! In six thousand years we have fashioned twenty-odd civilizations and destroyed every one. Today we are miles nearer than we ever were before to the possibility of self-extinction. What do you think the answer is? Military victory? Blueprints? The Atlantic Charter? The Six Stout Pillars of Peace? Or a radical despair of everything else but a "re-created humanity," with the tragedy and the triumph of a cross at the heart of it: that last and ugliest riddle life could spin, which seems to be somehow God's answer to all riddles; not a symbol of our hope, but his *act* by which alone hope is made possible.

So by way of Calvary does the lost challenge come ringing its way back into life. "And take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." It is the freedom of the human soul to respond; to catch step with its high mission again at the roll of that other drum; to set out once more on pilgrimage, with the sound of a trumpet in its ears. They say that's what the devil still misses most since the day he fell from heaven: the sound of the trumpets in the morning! If you look at life and listen, you will not be asking what it's all about anyhow—not with this crucified Galilean—alive!—and the gesture he flings at you: "Go ye, therefore!" Staking everything he has on your answer!

FOUR PIVOTAL FREEDOMS

We were made for that! It brings to mind the scene in Robin Hood where the vagabond forest chieftain settles down to be King Richard's henchman; grows fat in the palace and sleeps late. Until one day from under a greenwood tree comes the eerie note of Little John's horn, winding over the hills on the drowsy air, and through the window, and into his room: the room that had been so comfortable before and so deadly; and now—now he couldn't stand it! He had to be off! It's like that! Or when Mallory told us over here, just before he lost his life trying to scale Mount Everest, what a fascination the lonely grandeur of that majestic peek held for him, how it kept calling and calling, even in his dreams. It was intolerable! They sent a wire home to London, after they had waited days and days: "Mallory and his companions missing. When last seen they were going strong for the top!"

I give you *these* freedoms over against that crippling slavery of the lost conscience, the lost neighbor, the lost God and the lost challenge. They are the freedoms of the Christian gospel, and they gave our freedom birth. God's Word, God's Commonwealth, God's Deed, God's Summons. It is these that make persons out of people, and keep humanity human. They are the four pivotal freedoms of history, without which there is no freedom. You don't preserve them by fighting for them. When you have to fight for them they are on their way out. You preserve them by using them. This Church of Jesus Christ has borne her unfailing testimony to them through the years. God give her now, in *you,* hands and feet and a tongue!

An August 24, 410, Alaric the Goth began to sack the Roman empire. And there was chaos. Cities were destroyed. Libraries were burned. Estates were ruined. There was no law. Violence reigned supreme. There was only the Church. And on that wreckage she built. Now here is the question I should like to ask, writes D. R. Davies, in a little book from England: How did it happen—however did it happen—that there was a Church there at all? Because for four centuries men and women had been listening to the story of a Nazarene, and telling it with gladness and courage! They didn't have to defend in their world this faith they had in another; they used it, stalwart as it was, to stem the flood of savagery in this: and they lifted civilization to a splendor that surpassed the splendor of Rome.

It wasn't a miracle—or was it? Nameless people turning the tides of history!

Christ, the Realist

In the shadow of the coming peace conference will stand a Young Man—a Young Man who died at thirty-three on a cross. We have come to feel that he is alive—terribly alive, the only One really alive—and that he is the very uncovering of the moral universe. He is the moral universe personalized. The peacemakers will have to come to terms with him, for he has a way of having the final say in everything. We once did him and ourselves a wrong by thinking him an idealist, impractical. We are beginning to see how dead-wrong we were. It is beginning to dawn on us that everything that opposes him goes to pieces in instability, or worse, goes down in red ruin. We see that he is a realist—a realist so far ahead of us that we think it idealism. E. Stanley Jones.

There can be no doubt that the psychological power of the image of Christ is unique. No other figure, human or divine, has ever been able to produce such intense and wide-spreading effects upon the human imagination and through it upon the whole of the human race. James B. Pratt.

The Christ of the Easter Fact

By Lynn Hough Corson

ONE lovely summer day we visited a garden outside Jerusalem's old walls. It was a well-kept garden with potted flowers and blooming shrubs, indication of the care of some gardener who through the long summer's drought kept his garden fresh and fair.

Rising up at the end of the garden was a steep cliff. The face of the cliff was disfigured with deep cuts and gashes as though some ancient enemy had thrust and hacked it with a sword. As we stood off and looked at the face of the cliff, the gashes took on a certain kind of symmetry, and it seemed as if we were looking at the distorted resemblance of a human skull; two deep pits for eyes, a long slash for a mouth. Was this hill the Place of the Skull, was this spot Golgotha? If we had stood here nineteen hundred years ago would we have heard the dying prayer of one who, looking full into his Father's face, said: "Into thy hands I commend my spirit"? Would we have seen that sacred head, now wounded with all the cruel hate man's inhumanity could devise, suddenly drop forward; would we have seen the relaxation of those muscles taut with agony; would we have watched the Savior die? Would we have sadly turned away with a grief that tore our hearts to shreds and said within ourselves: "Thus passeth our best hope; thus dieth our great dream"?

But wait, along the base of the cliff which forms the boundary of two sides of the little garden is a doorway cut in solid rock. It is a rock-hewn tomb. If we had come early to this place some nineteen hundred years ago; if we had come with heavy hearts to mourn the passing of our dearest friend, to search the silence of this place for some remembrance of his voice, to see if in the dawn his face, so full of love, so gentle, yet so strong, would stand out clear before us—would we too have witnessed those events before which these nineteen centuries stand in awe? Would we have felt a surging in our hearts, the throb of a great resurrected hope, an exaltation flowing in upon us like the rush of some fresh incoming tide? Would we have known that our Best Hope could never die, that our Great Dream lived on and would live on forever?

THE TRANSFORMING POWER OF EASTER

Such thoughts arose within us as we stood in a garden without the city's wall and looked at Golgotha and then at Joseph's tomb. Such thoughts arise within us now as we come again to pay our tribute to the Son of God, let loose upon the world where nothing—neither hate, nor violence, nor wickedness—can stop the forward march of his great spirit. Before the mystery of the Easter fact we stand in awe; we still are in the mood of one who wrote: "Consider all this wonder, O my soul."

For it is the Easter fact that turned biography into religion. In the alembic of the Easter experience the lead of earth was transmuted into the gold of heaven. A great man became a Living Lord; a prophetic voice now carried the overtones of the divine; gracious words now took on the cadences of love spoken by the Great Heart of all the universe. The Jesus who walked and talked and preached and prayed and died became the Christ who walks and talks and preaches and prays and lives in all our hearts. The Easter fact is the divine certification, the setting of the seal of truth upon the word spoken by the side of Jordan: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." It is the Easter fact that rescued the Christian movement from becoming an historic phenomenon about which learned papers might be written, and set it free as a living redemptive force, eternally contemporary—because the one who burst the bars of death now ranges all the highways of the world and meets man at the level of his needs. The Easter fact is the local that became the universal, the temporal that became the timeless. It is the refocusing of faith's vision; the good companion became the Eternal Friend.

THE HEART OF THE FAITH

The Gospels give the setting for the great fact, although they are by no means in agreement as to what actually happened. Here is the record of one fact and there is the record of another, and there seems to be an irreconcilibility about the varying accounts. But it is important to remember that the same central truth is held up by all. They all believed that Jesus moved from life to death to life again, and at the heart of varying accounts the great cry "He is risen!" can be heard. St. Paul made no mention of the setting in which the event transpired, but that it did transpire is a pivotal point of faith for this man of whom someone wrote, "Three cubits in stature, he touched the sky." The resurrected Christ was the nexus of his faith. He could write, "Last of all, he was seen of me also."

It is quite fitting, then, that the climax of the Christian year should be this day when in the early morning many years ago those who loved him heard him say, "All hail!" and held him by the feet and worshiped him. It is true instinct that has brought the church he founded to the realization of its own true birthday, for the church held its first and loveliest service when in the upper room on that night that saw his rising from the grave, those who loved him knew that he was there and heard him say, "Peace be unto you." It is fellowship with his living spirit that has been the central faith by which the church has lived.

And so with grateful hearts we turn our faces toward Jerusalem and live again the ancient mystery, and feel again the throb of hope that surges through our hearts and wings our spirits and lifts us up above the darkness of these days and makes us see that Light of Lights, love's blazing beacon which no evil wind can

extinguish. The calamities through which we live but tend to set off in sharp contrast the certainties by which we live. I suspect that this wartime Easter season will be a time of more genuine heartsearching, of more honest evaluation of the things that count and the things that do not count, than most of us have had for many a year.

I saw a service banner the other day with a cluster of blue stars in the white central field. But up above on the red border was one gold star. What has the Christ of the Easter fact to say of that? For death is in the air. That pale horseman with power to kill "with sword and with hunger" is riding across the earth. The question has always been acute, for there is not one of us who has ever faced the parting we call death and watched one whom we love slip out across that silent sea without our eagerly grasping after the hope, yea more, the faith, that there is another shore to which they go. Even the most hardened of us has at such a time a hope that far transcends our skepticism. Robert Ingersoll spent his life arguing about the unreality of religion, the absurdity of immortality, the ability of people to stand in their own strength, to be master of their own fate and captains of their own soul. But when he stood at the open grave of his brother he used language which is common to all humanity: "Hope sees a star, and listening Love can hear the flutter of a wing."

THE ETERNAL QUEST

The Easter fact is confirmation of our hope. It is obviously false to think that no one believed in immortality before the day that Jesus laid aside the winding sheet and moved again among those whom he loved. Deep-grained in human nature, so deep that the thin veneer of speculation, the little doubts that assail the mind, the quasi-scientific interpretation of life that leaves no room for the soul, cannot hide or erase it, lies the belief that we are not like sparks to be snuffed out in darkness, but are living centers of light that cannot be extinguished. As far back as we may wish to go, even among the most primitive peoples, there has been this urge toward pushing out the boundaries of life until they touched eternity.

Man has always built the house of his hope toward the eternal sunrising. To be sure, all kinds of curious and impossible things have been believed, and we have added our full share of oddities to the record of man's striving after immortality; we have been guilty of materializing what we call heaven with our visions of golden streets and pearly gates and white-clothed angels plucking at the strings of celestial harps. We cannot do otherwise than seek to define what is beyond our experience in terms of the things we know. But that all have striven, that we still strive after a knowledge and a certainty, is not to be doubted; and if we picture that certainty in terms which may not be intellectually acceptable, that does not lessen for one moment the urgency of our search. Instinctively we feel there is some value in man's life that does not deserve to die, and we share this feeling with the whole of humanity.

And the Easter fact comes to us confirming our deepest instinct. Jesus in his teaching did what all of us must do: he defined that great unknown in terms of the familiar. He talked about the Father's house, about the mansions prepared for those who, having kept the faith, would take up residence in their eternal home. His meaning is clear enough: the Father's love which had been manifest in many ways during their earthly pilgrimage would not cease when, in the moment of transition, they moved out to be with him. What he really was saying was that the family ties would not be broken; that within the compass of the Father's love each would have his separate place; and that none need be afraid, for the unknown was not unknown at all to him, since he had trod that way before and knew the whole geography of heaven. He never gave us its dimensions, nor sought in any crude way to try to map what we should find beyond that far horizon. He indicated that all that belongs to our essential selves would still live on and that we would enjoy unbroken fellowship with God.

THE LIVING LIGHT

When Augustine came to England as a missionary he was met by King Ethelbert. After the king had heard the Christian speak, he said: "All of us are like little birds that fly out of darkness into light. This man thinks he knows about the darkness from whence we come and the darkness to which we go. Let us listen to him." Jesus drew no diagram of heaven, but we listen attentively to him for his sure word about the mystery we so often call the darkness of the grave. He taught that death is nothing to fear; for death is but an open gate through which we journey, not to a fairer land on high, but to a lovelier life with God. When O. Henry lay dying he called to his nurse: "Nurse, light me a candle if you please, I am afraid to go home in the dark." Had he known the Living Light he would not have known fear but trust; he would have been content to place himself completely in the Master's keeping, singing in his heart those words of faith:

> So long Thy power has blest me, sure it still
> Will lead me on;
> O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till
> The night is gone.
> And with the morn those angel faces smile;
> Which I have loved long since and lost awhile.

KNOWING BY FAITH

These are some things we must accept by faith. When men asked Plato to describe the Absolute Good which was the peak and summit of his philosophic system, he replied that it could not be described but only apprehended. It is not given to any one of us to speak with certaintly about the nature of the life beyond the grave; we cannot describe what that life is like. We can only apprehend that good and know it to be real. Our faith is such that while we may not know with certainty the lineaments of that land beyond the stars, its hidden mystery does not frighten us, for we have a Friend who says, "Let not your heart be troubled." I for one am quite content to take him by the hand and

trust his leadership, having confidence that "he who made the day will show the way, so I securely go."

O, death was all a nameless dread till Easter came,
Till he arose from that mysterious sleep,
Till he came back from out the silence deep
And smiling said, "Fear not, it is
Life's deeper name;
For this I came."

TRUTH MUST CONQUER

In our evaluation of the Easter fact there is a further truth worth our consideration. It is a confirmation of our belief in the triumph of the decent and the good. Those who nailed Jesus to a cross were deluding themselves if they thought that violence and death are the final words in a universe so utterly moral that men cannot successfully break its irrevocable laws. What cynics we would be if that fair truth that came to flower in our Lord could be forever crushed beneath the hateful heel of bigotry! Did he walk steadfastly because he knew the truth for which he stood could never die? In the Garden of Gethsemane he faced those who came to lead him back to custody in regal confidence, chiding them for seeking him at night when they could have found him at the temple in the light of every day.

Did he realize that "truth crushed to earth shall rise again," that he was the servant of a truth revealed to him by God that would live on despite the worst the world could do to him? I think he did. He was not led captive to the cross like some shrinking criminal facing a terrible judgment for his crime. He walked bravely to meet it, as if to say: "Here is a test I welcome. See if you can kill with your poor hands the dream I hold within my breast. See if nails and spear and crown of thorns and the cruel heat of the sun and the hate in human hearts can alter even by one little word the Father's plan for man's redemption. If you lay violent hands on me do you think love will die; do you think the vision of the brotherhood of man will be then a forgotten hope that men once wistfully believed and now know can never be fulfilled; do you think that justice is some earth-bound thing that acts as substitute for man's vindictiveness and has no bearing on God's conduct of the world? Here is my body. Break it if you will, and see if love and brotherhood and justice can be thus destroyed."

WHEN THE WHOLE WORLD PAUSED

And for three days it seemed as if the very universe held its breath in dread. But on the third day there issued from the tomb the Christ whose conquest over death forever gives us confidence in the moral ordering of the world. We stand in need of some reassurance now that this still is so. The Easter fact comes once again to reinforce and bolster up our belief in eternal permanency of that which is good with the concomitant assurance that the good will ultimately sit on the throne of triumph. An ancient record says that "the stars in their courses fought against Sisera." When we cry again in exaltation, "The Lord is risen," we are but restating this ancient truth. For our Lord's conquest of the grave is God's mighty affirmation flung out to all who have the sense to heed. We live in a positive world. Brute force may seem to have its little day of triumph, but love is alive and will win. The wicked may flourish like the green bay tree, but goodness is alive and shall peal the final victor's note. Hate draws boundary lines between men's hearts, but brotherhood is alive and knowns no boundary lines or superficial demarcations.

The story is told that when the Emperor Julian was on the road to the East he stopped for a month at Antioch, the city of his youth, to rest and re-equip his legions. The emperor had recently decreed that the new religion of the Galilean should be stopped by violence if necessary, and he strolled one day through the city to see if his decree was being enforced. He found to his satisfaction that dirt and refuse had been heaped against the walls of Christian chapels, and that the windows of those places where Christ's name had been praised had been boarded up. On his walk he met a certain merchant by the name of Agathon, one of the few remaining Christians in Antioch. He engaged the merchant in conversation. While they talked he saw the festive crowds streaming into the marble temple of Mithra. They could hear the sound of priestly music and the voices of the faithful singing hymns in praise of the sun god. Agathon was silent at what he saw, but Julian suddenly laughed and said: "Tell me, Agathon, what has become of the Carpenter of Nazareth? Is he still around?" And pointing to the temple and the joyous multitude, the emperor added: "Has he any work at all these days, your Carpenter? Are there still some little jobs coming his way, at least?" For a moment Agathon was silent. Then, looking the emperor in the face, he said: "Yes, Julian, the Carpenter of Nazareth is very busy these days. He is nailing together a coffin for your empire."

OUR ETERNAL CONTEMPORARY

There is yet a further reassurance that the Easter fact brings to us. It is the guarantee that the Jesus of history is now our eternal contemporary. He kept promising his disciples that he would surmount the barriers of time and space. "At that day," he said, "ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." And now the promise was fulfilled. He had gone away, but he had come again; and whether in the upper room, or on the Emmaus road, or by the Sea of Galilee, he was with them and they knew he was there. He would always be with them, for his parting word had been, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

The Apostle Paul knew how well the promise had been kept, for did he not write to the Church at Ephesus praying that "Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith"? Such knowledge was almost too wonderful for the early followers. They had heard him say it, but treated it with incredulity, and now in amazement they realized that he had foretold what had actually transpired. The irrefutable fact remained: they had seen him again, they had talked with him again, they had eaten with him again, he was alive.

Robert William Dale was in the process of writing his Easter sermon and, when halfway through, the living Christ broke in upon him as he never had before. He reports his reaction to the experience: " 'Christ is alive,' I said to myself, 'Alive! . . . Can that really be true—living as really as I myself am?' I got up and walked around, repeating, 'Christ is living.' At first it seemed strange and hardly true, but at last it came upon me in a burst of sudden glory. It was to me a new discovery. I thought all along that I had believed it, but not until that moment did I feel sure about it. I then said, 'My people shall know about it; I shall preach about it again and again until they believe it as I do.' "

THE GLORY OF THE RESURRECTION

Some similar experience came to those first disciples like a "burst of sudden glory" and from that moment they made it the business of their lives to preach it again and again. In the lowly homes of the poor, in market places, on temple steps, in upper rooms apart, before mobs that came to do them harm, on Mars Hill in Athens, before the Roman governor, and as legend has it in the Imperial Palace in Rome, these men spoke out their hearts, that "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day." It was this sublime conviction that winged their feet. A deed had been done for man's good that all the world should know; a companionship had been guaranteed by God that would forever give his children the consciousness that they did not walk alone, but by their sides and in their hearts the great Christ lived and moved and had his being. You know for yourself the wave of joy that would sweep over your soul if suddenly you realized that the dear one whose sleeping form you laid to rest now stood again by your side, speaking to you, gripping your hand, and saying "never again shall we part."

One morning after breakfast Elizabeth Barrett Browning left her husband and went upstairs while a servant cleared the table where he expected to work. "After the servant had left, soft footsteps sounded behind him and his wife's hand on his shoulder kept him from turning so he could see her face. She slipped a manuscript into his pocket, saying, "Please read this and if you don't like it, tear it up!" Then she fled back upstairs while Robert Browning sat down to read the noblest love sequence ever written by a woman to a man of her choice." Hidden in one of these "Sonnets from the Portuguese" runs the line: "The face of all the world is changed, I think, since first I heard the footsteps of thy soul." In a far more significant sense, those who loved the Lord, hearing his footsteps again in their souls, found that the face of all the world was changed for them, and realizing what he had meant to them they went out to change the face of all the world.

A FAITH WITH POWER

For the plain fact is that the risen Lord will not let those who love him glory only in that love as an epicure might delight in some subtle taste. Such vague mysticism would never have satisfied him. The promise of his comradeship was a blessed thing indeed. But it was meant to be more than that. It was to be an empowering thing; it was to be an inner compulsion which drove them forward to the accomplishment of the tasks he set. Again, the great word was spoken by St. Paul when he wrote: "The love of Christ constraineth us." The author of Hebrews also knew that the resurrected Lord was not only the soul's friend but the divine compulsion, for in his closing word to those to whom he wrote he says: "The God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ." St. Mark emphasized the same great truth in the last verse of the last chapter of his book. He spoke of the ascension of Jesus and the power of Jesus transmitted to his disciples, the instrument of that power being his presence with them: "And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs."

"The Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs." It is in this way that the reality of the Easter fact is ultimately confirmed. It was never meant to be an isolated mystical experience enabling us to build a little shrine somewhere in the recesses of our souls to which we can repair and there, like Bernadette, gaze in adoration at the wonder that we find. Do you remember the conversation between the risen Lord and Peter? Peter's prompt admission of affection for his Lord was followed by his Lord's command, "Feed my sheep." Through all the years since that day there have been those, constrained by the comradeship of Christ, who have been giving themselves to the confirming of the word with signs.

SACCHARINE RELIGION

There is a saccharine type of Christianity with which I have little patience. It is all sweetness and light and no moral power. It makes delightful esthetes of its adherents but sets them about no great task. It can sing, "Floods of joy o'er my soul like the deep billows roll since Jesus came into my heart," and then rest content to experience that joyous inundation. Such a poor substitute for faith would not have appealed to Jesus, nor would he have approved of it for us. A correct appraisal of the Easter fact leads to one inescapable conclusion: the Risen Lord, working in us and through us, seeking to accomplish God's redemptive purposes.

Armed by this faith, we take our stand and work for that day when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ. Amen and amen.

THERE is no legitimate reason why any man should be confused concerning the character of God. He is just what Jesus was.

Jesus represents all of God that could be contained in one human life. ROY L. SMITH.

The Persistent Triumph of Life Over Death

By Charles W. Kegley

Jesus said to her, "I myself am the resurrection and life. He who believes in me will live on, even if he dies, and no one who is alive and believes in me will ever die. Do you believe that?" John 11:24, 25.

THERE have been few periods in history when it has seemed easier to most people to believe in the triumph of death over life. This year, if ever, one feels like saying: "What a strange time to celebrate Easter, and what a stranger time yet to assert that life always triumphs over death! It looks to me as though this is a world in which *death* is the final word, not *life.*" Who does not share such a mood this Easter?

Worse yet, this mood is merely an intensification of an uncriticized but very deep impression that life is always at most transient and fugitive. Your life and mine is short and perishable. Impermanence does mark everything human. And not only each one of us, but generations of men and whole civilizations "fall as multitudinous as snowflakes on the earth only to melt away." As one of the old hymns expressed it, "Where are kings and empires now?" Babylonian, Egyptian, Greek, Roman civilizations—where are they and their millions of persons? Furthermore, as if to overwhelm us with the fact of fugitiveness and death, the earth itself was once uninhabitable and will again be uninhabitable.

MEETING TODAY'S MOOD

Must it not strike one as being the better part of Christian realism thus to place ourselves exactly in the mood in which we find men's minds today? I am convinced that it is, because it is directly to this mood that the central assertion of Easter speaks. Aside from all the arguments for immortality (which rarely, I suspect, convince any doubter anyway) the essence of the Easter message is this: *Life persistently triumphs over death.*

Let us base what we have to say about the triumph of life over death firmly upon the words of Jesus. You will readily recall the statement made to Jesus by a person who shared, at least in part, the mood we have described. "Master, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will live!' But Martha said to him, 'I know that he will rise at the resurrection on the last day.'" Then Jesus spoke the correcting and enlarging words for Martha and for us to hear: "I myself am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me lives on, even if he dies [physically], and no one who is alive [spiritually] and believes in me will ever die [spiritually]. Do you believe that?" This is the solid foundation upon which a Christian may confidently build assurance of the persistent triumph of life over death. Before we see how this Easter truth is verified in and applied to our lives, let us see clearly what the Christian view of the triumph of life over death does *not* propose to teach.

THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS

For one thing, Jesus, and the New Testament, do not labor to prove that man lives after death. Life after death is a triumphant assertion of the Master and the writers of the New Testament; it is not the subject for weighty, exhaustive debate. Jesus proclaims a truth, he does not debate a hypothesis. For myself, it has always seemed that few persons are ever very much impressed or helped by arduous argument intended to prove that individuals survive physical death. As William James indicated in his famous Ingersoll Lectures at Harvard University on "Immortality," the authority of a university professor, the review of traditional arguments—presumed universal belief, the demand of justice, the desire of mankind—all these added together carry forward very little, if at all, a person's vital belief in the triumph of life over death. We may well be grateful, therefore, that the authors of the New Testament start with an assertion, and that the creeds of Christendom end with what is a dramatic and logical conclusion based on the prior faith in God that has been affirmed: *"and* I believe in everlasting life."

Equally important, in the second place, is the fact that Christian faith is not concerned about immortality, but about eternal life. Do you appreciate the difference? You must have observed that the equivalent for the English word "immortality" is not once used by Jesus. "I am the resurrection and the *life,"* he said. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." Ask yourself frankly: would you consider the mere going on and on and on of the "wheel of life" a desirable or a terrifying prospect? Undoubtedly most men would dread the prospect that life might go on forever as it is just now. Well, it has been precisely this realization that such a perpetuation is horrible in the extreme that led Buddhism to construct a doctrine of Nirvana according to which one may hope to escape from immortality into nothingness. The Christian experience and revelation is directly the opposite: it depicts an eternal *life* in the Kingdom of God in which the life of God is shared. Only in such a kingdom is there the absolute fulness of life which we fondly desire. This eternally creative life is a Christian conception, vastly different from the Buddhistic conception of immortality.

ETERNAL LIFE BEGINS HERE AND NOW

This leads us to a third and equally important emphasis which so many persons miss completely in their thoughts on eternal life: it is a radiant quality of life which begins *here and now.* Eternal life is a present possession, not a future reward. You participate in

eternal life now, or never; if you do not share it now, in this life, you may be sure you will not after you die. Recall the words of Jesus: "He who believes in me lives on, and no one who is alive and believes in me will ever die." Jesus put the important verbs in the present tense! This, incidentally, is one reason why the Easter message is as important for young as it is for aged persons. It asks each one of us: Are the qualities in our lives now the qualities that endure?

The Easter life is a triumphant life, so radiant that it is *worth* going on with always. *The eternal life into which Christian faith calls you is the present sharing of the goodness, truth and beauty of God's creative life.* It isn't a weird sort of existence—a floating about on a cloud, plucking a harp forever. You might get that impression from "Green Pastures" or from the "man on the street," but you will never get that conception from the New Testament or from St. John! If you know little or nothing in your present experience of this eternal quality of life, I suggest that you examine your life carefully and soon in the light of the Christian gospel and the steady, illuminating, shared life of the Christian Church. You are missing something, and you run the risk of missing it always!

No, the Christian message of Easter dare not be misunderstood as an effort to prove existence after death, or as the assertion of empty immortality, or as the promise of future reward. The message of Easter expressed in the words of Jesus speaks directly to our mood this year and says: When life is lived with God in Christ it cannot end or be defeated. If your life expresses the purposes and shares the spirit of God, it cannot conclude with death or disaster. Life in God triumphs over death, because God's life knows not defeat or death. You are now participating in this abundant and eternal life if your purposes and spirit are in Jesus Christ. "I am the life. . . . No one who is alive and believes in me will ever die." I ask you, as Jesus did: Do *you* believe that?

LESSONS FROM THE PHYSICAL REALM

Well, in order to carry this towering truth into our individual lives, and there see it verified and applied, consider, first, that this truth is exemplified in a fascinating way in your own body. There life persistently triumphs over death in that process of constant death and resurrection which physical science calls metabolism. In your own body cells must die in order that new cells may be born and life may continue. Your physician can tell you—thanks to the marvelous way in which the Creator put this principle into effect in human beings—that unless your body dies and changes cells at least every seven years, it runs the risk of perishing. Of the persons over thirty years of age who share these thoughts, who has a single physical particle with which he was born? No one. Thus surely does life persistently change and triumph over death in your own innermost experience. Here, then, is a compelling illustration of the Easter assertion: Life does persistently triumph over death.

Turn now from the physical realm to the realm of personal and spiritual life. Is it true in this realm that life persistently triumphs over death? Yes, as Christians we know that personalities who share the life of God in Christ persistently triumph over death—here, now and always. We need to see the implications of this truth for our personal lives, because too often even Christians think that the Easter message has been exhausted when it asserts that Jesus rose from the dead. To be sure, that was a great victory. But the significant triumph of Easter is this: you may witness and experience this triumph in your life by committing it utterly unto him. This was the purpose of Christ's death and resurrection—that through sharing his life everyone might triumph over death.

THE EASTER TRUTH LIVED OUT

Now that we have taken this large step in our understanding of the Easter truth, observe how the truth is illustrated in our lives—how now, all about us, men and women exemplify, by living in Christ's spirit, the triumph of live over death.

Here is a mother whose name is known to all of you, whose experience exemplifies this truth, and who is, nevertheless, but one among many who similarly express this truth. Calvin Coolidge, Jr., died in Washington at the dawn of what President and Mrs. Coolidge had the right to assume would be an abundant life. Was death triumphant, or life? One year later Mrs. Coolidge wrote the following words in her home in Northhampton, Massachusetts:

> You, my son,
> Have shown me God.
> Your kiss upon my cheek
> Has made me feel the gentle touch
> Of Him who leads us on.
> The memory of your smile, when young,
> Reveals His face,
> As mellowing years come on apace.
> And when you went before,
> You left the gates of Heaven ajar
> That I might glimpse,
> Approaching from afar,
> The glories of His grace.
> Hold, son, my hand,
> Guide me along the path,
> That, coming,
> I may stumble not
> Nor roam,
> Nor fail to show the way
> Which leads us—Home.

So: life, not death, persistently triumphs when it shares the purposes and spirit of God in Christ.

Yonder is a young couple, or a family circle, sharing love at its best—mutual and self-giving, not selfish and seeking to use another person. You know their names because their number, fortunately, is legion, and so you have the privilege of naming them among your friends. Such persons are thrilling illustrations of the persistent triumph of life over death because they share the spirit of love which "abideth forever."

Does someone say that death is the last word even here? Then we answer, No! The spiritual values of love, faith, hope, involve persons that express and share them (this is one of the profound meanings of

the doctrine of the shared life of the Trinity). Love is not an abstraction, like the number four or the law of gravitation. Love, truth, goodness, beauty—these are abiding qualities of personal life. Only persons love, share beauty, seek truth, and achieve and express goodness. In these eternal qualities of life in God there is evermore "effort, and expectation, and desire and something evermore about to be."

'HE THAT BELIEVETH'

Let us draw one final truth from our text. We now see that you and I may share in this Christian life which persistently triumphs over death. Observe the condition Jesus clearly set forth in his statement: "He that believeth in me . . . shall live." Not necessarily everyone, but surely the person who is committed to the life of God in Christ shall live eternally. The choice of life triumphant over death is up to you and me. As long as we live it is a "live option," but not even God will tempt us not to live this triumphant life or compel us to live in its spirit. Do you recall the ancient story of the would-be cynic who, seeking to outwit the sage, held a tiny bird in his hand and asked the sage two questions? The first was: "What have I in my hand?" The sage replied, "A bird." Then the cynic, proposing to trap the sage by letting the bird fly away or crushing it to death, and so proving the sage incorrect in either answer he might give, asked: "Is it dead or alive?" The sage replied, "As you will."

So, life can triumph over death, but whether your personal life persistently triumphs over death or not depends on your decision. The Master whose triumph over death we celebrate rose that you, through him, might always have life and have it more abundantly. Will you commit yourself now to life in his spirit, triumphant and eternal, a present possession? Easter offers this life to you—now.

Beyond the Horizon

WHEN men go down to the sea in ships,
'Tis not to the sea they go;
Some isle or pole the mariners' goal,
And thither they sail through calm and gale,
When down to the sea they go.

When souls go down to the sea by ship,
And the dark ship's name is Death,
Why mourn and wail at the vanishing sail?
Though outward bound, God's world is round,
And only a ship is Death.

When I go down to the sea by ship,
And Death unfurls her sail,
Weep not for me, for there will be
A living host on another coast
To beckon and cry, "All hail!"

ROBERT FREEMAN.

The Man Christ

HE built no temple, yet the farthest sea
Can yield no shore that's barren of His place
For bended knee.

He wrote no book, and yet His words and prayer
Are intimate on many myriad tongues,
Are counsel everywhere.

The life He lived has never been assailed,
Nor any precept, as He lived it, yet
Has ever failed.

He built no kingdom, yet a King from youth
He reigned, is reigning yet; they call His realm
The Kingdom of the Truth.

THERESE LINDSEY.

A Pastoral Prayer

BY HERBERT L. WILLETT

HOLY FATHER, Thou hast in the sacred Scriptures bidden us to draw near to Thee at all times with our prayers and our petitions. No seasons are too early or too late for such approach to Thee, the Eternal, the Source of life, and the Giver of every needed blessing. Day by day we come to the throne of grace in gratitude, in confession, and in earnest request for Thy companionship and Thy directing word. We have many needs to bring to Thee, food, shelter, health, love, and fellowship with all the true and the holy. But most of all we need Thyself, our Father, our Comforter, our Hope and our exceeding great Reward.

In this season of the year, made glorious by the memory of our Savior's conquest of death, we would renew and deepen our sense of participation in the Master's spirit of sacrifice, of devotion to the world's great needs, and of victory over the power of evil and of death. In days when the world is passing through its Gethsemane of war-wrought sorrow, we would join our petitions with those of all lovers of peace in urgent prayer for the speedy ending of the present tragic conflict and the coming of an enduring time of good will among the nations. May Thy Kingdom come in new and increasing power in all lands, and in this prayer we dedicate ourselves to constant effort to bring to realization the longings of mankind, the enlargement of the ministries and the influence of the Church, and the fulfillment of the prayer of our Lord for the unity of all his followers, that mankind everywhere may take seriously his divine mission and program.

In the name and spirit of the Christ we offer this prayer. Amen.

The Minister and His Theological Books

By Thomas S. Kepler

A RECENT questionnaire sent to ministers in one section of the United States showed that the average minister was neglecting his reading. With the pressure of multitudinous duties of a parish, the neglect is easy. Yet it must be avoided. One district superintendent I know has his ministers give him a list of the books they have read during the year, just before conference time. Many groups of ministers have reading clubs in which each minister buys a current book, reads it and sends it to another member of the club; thus, if the club has twelve members, each member is able to read twelve new books. One group of ministers meets once a month for a paper and a discussion of the study they have been making; in this way they have in recent years carefully re-covered the history of the Christian Church. A district superintendent, in another instance, has organized various groups of his ministers into study groups, which he visits at intervals. By such methods ministers are trying to counteract the problem of neglecting their study habits.

A roll call of America's great preachers will reveal them as intense readers. One of these men was in my home recently. After lunch we talked about books. I found him alive to recent books on world problems and I learned that the books he was reading were not only "best sellers," but also books concerned basically with economic and political theory; they were *study* books. As our discussion continued I discovered that he knew recent books on New Testament criticism; he was at home among contemporary New Testament scholars.

● *'Man Is What He Reads'*

Great preachers read great books. The intellectual profundity of giant books will not give ministers sermon illustrations, but those books will gear them into reality so that their preaching will savor of authority. I reviewed for one of our religious journals Hartshorne's *Man's Vision of God*. It is a tremendous book for careful study of organic theism and is greatly rewarding. In my review of the book I said: "I advise careless 'philosophers' or ministers fishing for homilies to spend their money elsewhere; however, if any of these men feels repentant of shallow thinking in these serious days and wishes to awaken to 'what theism is all about', here is a book for them to study." What I said about Hartshorne's book I should like to say about all great books which have lasting value for ministers.

Conferences of ministers vary in regard to the types of books read. A man from a religious publishing house said to me: "You would be surprised to see how much the types of books differ as indicated from the purchases of the ministers from different conferences. For example, the ministers in conference X buy primarily books of sermons and lighter reading; they avoid *study* books. However, when we go to conference B we always stock our book tables with the best, most thought-provoking books of the year." I happen to know the men in conference B; and long before I knew the statement in regard to the books they were reading I had occasionally remarked: "I do not know of any conference of ministers who in general are more alert, sincere and vitally alive to what the ministry is about than these men." "Man *is* what he *reads*," might be a good adage to apply to ministers!

Thomas S. Kepler

● *When and How Shall a Minister Study?*

The free time of a minister is both a privilege and a responsibility, especially as it relates itself to the way he studies. The demands of a particular parish will also determine how time can be used for study. A friend of mine, now one of America's well known younger preachers, found himself fifteen years ago the minister of a prominent downtown church. During his first months in this expansive parish he spent many hours daily in pastoral calls, so that his best energies were being used as pastor rather than preacher. A wise layman of that community told the young minister confidentially: "We appreciate the interest you are giving to people in your parish calling. But this church, because of its geographical position, demands that its minister be *primarily* a great preacher. My advice to you is that you decrease the amount of time in parish calling and concentrate your time on studying and preaching." This my friend did by renting a room in a downtown office building where telephone and visitors could not intrude. There he spent his morning hours in study, laying the foundation of a ministry of great influence.

Dr. S. Parkes Cadman once said that he always spent two hours reading at the end of the day, regardless of the time he returned from an evening engagement; and that he habitually read two hours each morning before he cared for other engagements. Out of his tremendously busy life at least four hours a day were always salvaged for study.

Another acquaintance of mine, who does a great deal of lecturing away from his church during the week, always takes a suitcase full of books with him. On the train and in his hotel room he reads these new books, marks them, and then when he returns to his parish has his secretary make notations of the important ideas he has gathered from these books. I remember that on one trip of several weeks' duration he carried with him 73 books!

One of America's scholarly young ministers does his studying in segments. He has a large city parish which demands a great deal of pastoral attention. He concentrates his time on parish organization for several weeks, giving minor attention to his reading. Then he alternates his concentration entirely to his study, forgetting details of parish work.

A certain bishop has upon his reading desk a number of different types of current reading—a book of poetry, a biography, a book of plays, a volume of philosophy, a novel, a volume on contemporary world conditions, something on religious psychology. He aims to read from these books every day as time allows. He finds that this variety of daily reading is more stimulating to his mind than to read one book through before he samples others. He also segments his time for writing by having a reference

file, in which he places, as he reads, new ideas which may contribute to his articles or books.

One minister I know has tried to average a book a day in his reading. He varies the sizes of the books, because some days are filled with extraordinary activity which will not allow for long hours of reading; and on such days he reads the smaller books. Other busy ministers concentrate their time in reading by taking several months each summer to do the bulk of their reading and writing.

There is no set pattern for a minister's study habits. Each man must work out his pattern as it relates itself to his parish and his individual disposition. The main factor is that he reads—and reads—and reads!

● *How to Keep Growing In Theology*

Unless a minister can grow theologically his ideas may become a curiosity both to himself and to his parishoners. A college and seminary course of study is but the beginning, and not the end, of a minister's intellectual growth. Ministers who finished their seminary training before World War I are aware that movements such as Neo-Orthodoxy, Neo-Supernaturalism, Scientific Humanism, Cosmic Theism and Neo-Thomism are products of the decades following their days of formal theological training. They also realize that their knowledge of these movements has had contributive value in shaping the way their thoughts have grown in the past thirty years.

Occasionally a minister has said to me: "I wish I had time to keep abreast of contemporary religious philosophy. I should like to devote more time to reading about the movements which have been shaping the theological world of which we are a part. But it seems as though details of my parish work absorb so much of my time that I have little opportunity for such reading." My reply to these men has usually ended by suggesting a list of books which will give a general appreciation of contemporary religious movements. These books are not books treating one religious movement, but rather books that cover movements in a more comprehensive manner, so that a "feel" of present religious culture may be grasped.

A typical list of such books includes: Aubrey, *Present Theological Tendencies;* Ferré, *Swedish Contributions to Modern Theology;* Horton, *Contemporary Continental Theology;* Horton, *Contemporary English Theology;* Wieman-Meland, *American Philosophies of Religion;* Kepler, *Contemporary Religious Thought: An Anthology.*

(The writer of this article apologizes for mentioning his two anthologies. However, they were published for the purpose suggested in this article.)

After reading such a list of books the reader may build for himself a bibliography of books which deal more concentratedly with particular religious movements. The books which I have found full of monumental suggestions are:

Brunner, *The Mediator;* Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man;* Tillich, *The Religious Situation* on types of Neo-Supernaturalism.

Rufus Jones, *Studies in Mystical Religion* and *New Studies in Mystical Religion* on mystical patterns of thinking.

Maritain, *True Humanism*—the best book on Neo-Thomism.

Stimulating and edifying books on Scientific Humanism are those by Max Otto, *Things and Ideals* and *The Human Enterprise;* Potter, *Humanism, A New Religion;* Dewey, *A Common Faith;* Haydon, *The Quest of the Ages.*

Various types of theism are described with excellence by Hartshorne, *Man's Vision of God;* Whitehead, *Process and Reality;* Brightman, *A Philosophy of Religion;* Wieman-Horton, *The Growth of Religion;* Lyman, *The Meaning and Truth of Religion;* Rall, *Christianity;* Calhoun, *God and the Common Life;* Hough, *The Christian Criticism of Life.*

● *Standard Books on Religious Subjects*

After a discussion of books on contemporary religious movements, someone has occasionally asked me for a more inclusive bibliography which would give him a selected reading list on other aspects of the Christian religion. The books which follow are among those most frequently given.

Of the various contemporary books on worship seven stand out supreme:

Sperry, *Reality in Worship*
Vogt, *Art and Religion*
Underhill, *Worship*
Seidenspinner, *Form and Freedom in Worship*
Heiler, *Prayer*
Steere, *Prayer and Worship*
Wieman, *Methods of Private Religious Living*

A "feel" of history does more to give a minister an orientation to his own period than any other type of study. Emerson was right when he said, "The lesson of life is to learn what the centuries have to say to the hours." A study of history greatly contributes to "the lesson of life" which ministers are seeking to understand and interpret to their people.

While there are many books which stimulate thinking upon a Christian philosophy of history, the books I would suggest are these:

Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity, 5 volumes*
McGiffert, *A History of Christian Thought,* 2 volumes (To Erasmus)
Sorokin, *The Crisis of Our Age*
Spengler, *The Decline of the West* (Stimulant, rather than antidote)
Christianity in the Light of Modern Knowledge (A Collective Work)
Macmurray, *The Clue to History*
Lietzmann, *The Beginnings of the Christian Church* (First three centuries)
Lietzmann, *The Founding of the Church Universal*
Morrison, *What Is Christianity?*

Publishers' figures show that ministers buy most books relative to Jesus: and so it should be because Jesus is the center of our faith. The danger in regard to books on Jesus is that it is better not to read an inferior book about Jesus. Furthermore, if a minister is to read carefully about Jesus, he should read interpretations from various schools of thinkers, else his own views get into a set groove.

Among the myriad books on Jesus the following are a well balanced, diverse group which will give a minister a comprehensive appreciation of Jesus' life and program:

Otto, *The Kingdom of God and the Son of Man*
Cadoux, *The Case for Evangelical Modernism*
Bultman, *Jesus and the Word*
More, *The Christ of the New Testament*
Guignebert, *Jesus*
Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth*
Knox, *The Man Christ Jesus*
Merejkowski, *Jesus Manifest*
Grant, *The Gospel of the Kingdom*
McCown, *The Search for the Real Jesus*
Cadbury, *The Peril of Modernizing Jesus*
Dodd, *The Parables of the Kingdom*
Goguel, *The Life of Jesus*
Manson, *The Teachings of Jesus*
Robinson, *The Sayings of Jesus*
Branscomb, *The Teachings of Jesus*
Craig, *The Beginning of Christianity*
Kepler, *Contemporary Thinking About Jesus: An Anthology*

For those who wish to carry their biblical study further, I have found these books exceedingly helpful:

Craig, *The Study of the New Testament*
Pfeiffer, *Introduction to the Old Testament*
Bewer, *Literature of the Old Testament*
Scott, *Literature of the New Testament*
Abingdon Commentary
Dodd, *The Authority of the Bible*
Filson, *Origins of the Gospels*

Dodd, *The Meaning of Paul for Today*
Grant, *Form Criticism*
Dibelius, *A Fresh Approach to the New Testament and Early Christian Literature*
Fosdick, *A Guide to Understanding the Bible*
Streeter, *The Four Gospels*
The Moffatt New Testament Commentaries

● *Guidance on Today's Problems*

In the past decade two series of books have been edited which every minister ought to have on his reading shelf: The Hazen Series and the books on the Oxford and Edinburgh conferences. The Hazen books are succinct, scholarly, readable. They are stimulating for ministers, and excellent to be passed around among parishioners. I have liked these books so much for browsing purposes that I recently gave a series to each of the fraternities at Lawrence College. In the series are:

Bennett, *Christianity—And the World*
Lyman, *Jesus*
Horton, *God*
Harkness, *Religious Living*
Latourette, *Toward a Christian Fellowship*
Steere, *Prayer and Worship*
Stewart, *The Church*
Tittle, *Christians in an Unchristian Society*
Calhoun, *What Is Man?*
Vlastos, *Christian Faith and Democracy*
Bowie, *The Bible*
Van Dusen, *Reality and Religion*

In these days of world chaos, when the only world institution which points to international construction is the Church, man needs to know what the Church *is*, how it *thinks*, what it can *do*. The series on the Oxford and Edinburgh conferences portrays the church in these functions. It seems to me that every minister ought to place this series of books as required reading. The list includes:

The Kingdom of God and History
The Church and Its Function in Society
The Christian Understanding of Man
Christian Faith and the Common Life
Church and Community
Church, Community and State in Relation to Education
The Universal Church and the World of Nations
Christian Faith and the Modern State
Christianity in the Eastern Conflicts
The Oxford Conference: Official Report
World Chaos or World Christianity

Lengthening Easter

By King D. Beach

OUR Easter eggs are too much in one basket! Yearly church programs increasingly come to climax in Easter. Consequently bad weather, an early date imposed by the calendar, and epidemics frequently interfere not merely with that high day but also with our whole year's work heading up in it.

We can develop plans whereby our Easter program covers not one but four Sundays. As a result, we are not then so dependent upon conditions beyond our control for the success of Easter and of our church program; and in addition, we multiply the influences of the day.

These four Sundays, mentioned in the following paragraphs, may each be lifted into high significance, and clearly incorporated into our Easter program.

First is Palm Sunday. Traditionally that day has been recognized in our programs, but it has been usually only a pale prelude to the glories of Easter. The plans for increasingly utilizing Holy Week, both in the local church and in united efforts, may be easily adjusted so that they exalt Palm Sunday as the gateway to Easter. Two other features have proved helpful in increasing interest and size of congregations—the baptism (or dedication) of infants, and the reception of the children who have been in training classes into church membership. Both of these events, annually observed and emphasized, will increasingly make Palm Sunday the first of our great Easter days.

Proper Observance of Easter

Easter is the second of these four days. The Order of Worship on Easter should not be cluttered with extra numbers of music, but emphasis should be placed upon superb quality rather than unusual quantity. Moreover, the Order of Worship should not be longer than usual since many of the congregation attend public worship and are irritated by a service long enough to discourage even the saints. The preacher should never make sarcastic reference to those who come to church "only on Easter" but should thank God for the sentiment which brings them once to God's House, and should make prayerful and effective use of the opportunity. Is it unfair to the saints for the preacher to have more in mind infrequent worshipers than frequent ones?

In order to make sure that the orderliness of the worship is maintained even in crowded conditions, and that all worshipers are well accommodated, many pastors have found that duplicate services (with the same decorations, Order of Worship, music and sermon at both services) on Easter morning are practicable and even necessary. Appeals to members to attend, if possible, the service scheduled at the earlier hour will be given generous and thoughtful response, particularly as they come to realize that they thus leave space at the second service for some who seldom worship God. Gradually that first service, with the assurance that seatings will be available, becomes nearly as well attended as the one at the usual hour.

Post-Easter Possibilities

The third great Sunday in the Easter season is the Sunday after Easter. In the church calendar it has been designated "Low Sunday" on the assumption that the expected reaction after Easter will produce a small congregation and depleted enthusiasm. This third Sunday may be made a great day by receiving on that day the large Easter class of new members into the fellowship of the church. The Order of Worship, the pastoral prayer and the sermon may all be pointed to the end that the Christian confession and the reception into the church becomes a deeply moving life commitment. The membership committee, which has cooperated with the pastor in winning new members, is given some part in the happy achievement. The governing board of the church assists in welcoming the class. The members of the church may be asked to renew their commitment, responding to the vows with the new members. The reception of the Easter class (still designated as such) on this Sunday, redeems it from being the hurried appendage to an overlong Easter service, and exalts "Low Sunday" into one of the best days of the year.

The Fourth Sunday

The fourth special Sunday of the Easter season follows. It is exalted by an observance of the blessed and sacred and happy sacrament of the Lord's Supper at which the new members who have joined the previous Sunday and also during the year are special guests and participants. Such an observance, uniting the new and older members not only to local church and denomination but also to the universal and historic church, becomes the religious climax of a wonderful Easter season.

This pastor testifies to the fact that these gradually developed plans have worked in differing churches in various sections of the country, and are suggestions that may enable other pastors to "lengthen Easter."

• WHO'S WHO in THIS ISSUE •

FROM 1915 to 1917 Rev. RALPH W. SOCKMAN was associate minister of Madison Avenue Methodist Church (now Christ Church), New York, and he has been minister there for twenty-seven years. He has a wide hearing through his radio broadcasts. Among his more recent books are *Recoveries in Religion* and *The Highway of God.* Just from the press is his book, *Date with Destiny.*

Having received his later education at Whitman College, Boston University School of Theology and Harvard University, Rev. CHARLES WESLEY FISHER became associate pastor at St. Paul's Methodist Church, Spokane, Wash., and last autumn he accepted a call to the pastorate of the Hays Park Methodist Church in that city.

Rev. JOSEPH W. REEVES *has for several years been* minister of the North Congregational Church, Winchendon, Mass.

Rev. PAUL SCHERER *has ministered at Holy Trinity* Church (Lutheran), New York, for nearly a quarter-century, and has broadcast for many years over the national chains. He is a favorite speaker at colleges and universities. Among his books are *Facts That Undergird Life* and *The Place Where Thou Standest.*

Rev. LYNN HOUGH CORSON *is in his second year as* minister of the Methodist Church in Princeton, N. J.

For several years Rev. CHARLES W. KEGLEY *has* ministered at St. Paul's United Lutheran Church, Evanston, Ill. He is acting chairman of the Northwestern University Board of Religion and director of the John Evans Religious Center at that university. He was a leader of the World Conference of Christian Youth, held in Amsterdam in 1939.

Rev. HERBERT L. WILLETT *is emeritus professor* of Oriental languages and literature, University of Chicago, and emeritus minister Kenilworth Union Church, Kenilworth, Ill.

Dr. THOMAS S. KEPLER *is professor of religion at* Lawrence College, Appleton, Wis.

Rev. KING D. BEACH *is minister of the First Meth*odist Church, Jackson, Mich.

TITLES AND TEXTS

What Pulpit Readers are Preaching About

TALMAGE C. JOHNSON, First Baptist, Kingston, N. C. "Is He Really Here?" Matt. 28:20—"And I will be with you all the time, to the very end of the world." (Moffatt)

J. PAUL COLEMAN, Community Methodist, Mariposa, Cal. "He Was Expendable." Isa. 53:5—". . . the blows that fell to him have brought us healing."

HOOVER RUPERT, Methodist, Olathe, Kan. "Dealing With Despair." Psalm 42:11—"Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God!"

DURWARD B. BROWN, Central Methodist, Wheeling, W. Va. "Christian Cost Accounting." Luke 14:28—"For which of you, desiring to build a tower, doth not first sit down and count the cost?"

HAROLD BLAKE WALKER, First Presbyterian, Oklahoma City, Okla. "Christianity and the American Mind." Luke 18:8—"And he spake . . . unto certain who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and set all others at naught."

EARLE T. MCKNIGHT, Bay View Baptist, Port Maitland, N. S., Can. "Partial Victory." Luke 18:22—"One thing thou lackest."

HAROLD H. WRIGHT, First Congregational-Unitarian, Ft. Collins, Colo. "Our Abiding Refuge in Evil Days." Psalm 46:10—"Be still and know that I am God."

JOHN B. CAVITT, First Presbyterian, San Bernardino, Cal. "A Secret Weapon of Warfare." Rom. 12:21—"Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

WILLARD C. MELLIN, First Presbyterian, Oakmont, Pittsburg, Pa. "Prisoners of Hope." "I believe in the life everlasting." (Apostles' Creed)

JAMES L. MARTIN, First Methodist, Port Jefferson, N. Y. "Our Dreams—and God's." Gen. 37-8—"And they hated him for his dreams."

CLARENCE G. LANGLEY, First Presbyterian, Red Wing, Minn. "Faith—Weight or Wings?" 1 John 5:4—"This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

MORRIS W. SINGER, St. John's Methodist, Kingman, Ariz. "Contagious Christianity." Matt. 4:19—"Come . . . and I will make you fishers of men."

ROY A. BURKHART, First Community Church, Columbus, O. "The Freedom to See It Through." Rom. 8:37—"In all these things ye are more than conquerors through Christ." Isa. 40:3-5—"Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight; and the rough ways shall be made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God."

JOHN F. C. GREEN, Congregational, McKeesport, Pa. "Expecting to be Glad." Phil. 1:19—"I expect to be glad; for I know that through your prayers and the help of the spirit of Jesus Christ, all this will turn out for my highest welfare."

FOR YOUR SERMON AND TEXT

. . . . . .

Title of sermon

. . . . . .

Text used (write out the text)

. . . . . .

Name of minister

. . . . . .

Name of church

. . . . . .

Address

The Editor's Page

The Event of the Month

THE emergence of Russia as the colossus of Europe has put a new face on the world scene. "War spins its own pattern," says Felix Morley, and the pattern which the present war has taken on has little resemblance to the pattern with which it began. Then Russia was on Hitler's side under a treaty of non-aggression. Now Russia is on our side, bearing the bloody brunt of the battle, and winning a position of such power in Europe and Asia that she bids fair to become the sole arbiter of the peace settlement. What Stalin wants he will have power to take. The only question will be, What does he want? The United States and Britain may protest against his taking what he wants, but their protests will be feeble. Neither the United States nor Great Britain, nor both of them together, is likely to fight Russia, or even threaten Russia, in order to make their protests good. What Stalin wants is becoming clearer with each new move. His great diplomatic stroke in setting the sixteen Soviet republics "free" in their foreign relations was intended to suggest to the countries he is about to conquer that, under Russia's hegemony, they could have both security and the essentials of independence. Stalin is playing a lone hand, but he is showing his hand by every play. He intends to gather all of Eastern Europe under the Soviet wing; and in the end he intends to control the fate of Germany. In the face of this realistic prospect, our future military operations in Europe should be measured, if not restricted. This country should have no ambition to deliver the knockout blow to Hitler with its astronomical cost in American lives. We should be well content to see that Stalin does not lose his chance to deliver that blow.

Stalin Shows His Hand

The Book of the Month

THE SHORT STORY OF JESUS, *by Walter Lowrie. Scribners, $2.50.*

THIS is a book I have long wanted someone to write. It is an interpretation of the events in the life of Jesus, and of his teaching, on the basis of what scholarship generally regards as the most authentic portions of the four Gospels. The author has abandoned as impossible any attempt to write a "Life" of Jesus, in the old sense of harmonizing the various accounts into a chronological record of the Master's movements from his baptism to his death. He takes the more assured results of critical scholarship and thus gives us a "short" story of Jesus. The writers of the Gospels, as we all know, set down the oral tradition after it had been in unwritten circulation many years after the church was founded. It has been the task of scholarship to determine the most original of these oral materials and to segregate from them the accretions which the tradition inevitably took on in the more or less fluid process of oral transmission. This work has been carried to great success by the modern method of so-called "form criticism." Dr. Lowrie, a conservative theologian, believes that the results of this critical labor are sufficiently ripe to warrant his bringing them together in a consecutive record. Two things will impress the reader, as they have impressed me. First, the substantial body of authentic knowledge of Jesus that survives the searching tests of modern criticism and, second, the new portrait of Jesus which this sifted knowledge unveils. Modern criticism presents us with a portrait of Jesus which is far more congenial to orthodoxy than to liberal theology.

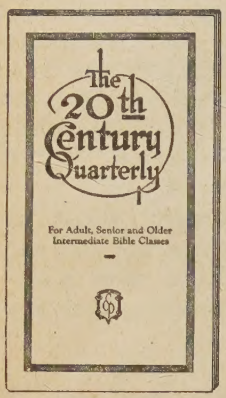
A Thought for the Month

A POPULAR American writer and humorist has just passed away leaving a long letter with instruction for the disposition of his body and the manner and mood in which his funeral services should be conducted. The letter also gives expression to the mood in which its author contemplates his leave-taking from this life. Professing no faith in a life beyond, and ridiculing the Christian burial ritual, the writer asked that all the customary deference paid to the body of the dead be dispensed with, and that if any memorial service is held it should follow two rules: "Keep it cheerful, boys and girls" and "Make it snappy." The mood of this letter and the specific instructions are those of a man laughing at death—not with the triumphant laughter of faith but with the ironic laughter of forced unconcern, as of one to whom death is without significance and life therefore without meaning beyond the temporal experience of it. Granted that our funeral customs need critical reconsideration and revision, it is unthinkable that the attitude expressed in this letter defines the mood in which such revision should be undertaken. Its writer was a typical child of his time. His letter will be read in many circles with a kind of sardonic glee as a "smart" thing to have done, and there will even be Christians who fail to sense its implications. For it reflects the prevailing attitude of a generation which has lost its orientation in the depths and heights of the human spirit and which delights to profane or chooses to ignore the high dignities of life. All that is distinguished in a man's life is brought to a focus in his death. For a man or his community to treat his death with indignity is an insult to life itself. To forbid one's friends to be serious in contemplation of one's passing is to defy an irresistible instinct of human nature and, by perverting it to make one's departure doubly sad.

Indignity To Death

Charles Clayton Morrison

For Wider Knowledge More Christian Character and Deeper Faith



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